

*Church-Ornament without Idolatry  
Vindicated :*

IN A  
SERMON  
Preach'd on Occasion of an  
ALTAR-PIECE lately Erected  
IN THE  
CHANCEL  
OF  
St. MARY WHITE-CHAPPEL.

By R. WELTON, D. D. Rector of the said Parish.

*Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Rom.  
I have loved the Beauty of thy Temple; Psal. xxxviii.  
Lord! They have digged down thine Altars, and I am left alone;  
Rom. xi. 3.  
Rejoyce not against me, O mine Enemy! Tho' I fall, I shall arise!*

L O N D O N :

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the Royal-Exchange in Cornhill. 1714.

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## The P R E F A C E.

**I**T may be expected that I shou'd give some Account to the World of the Occasion that led me to Design and Publish a Discourse of this Nature.

And, indeed, I cannot but look upon't to be Just and Reasonable: Not so much upon my own, as upon a publick Account; both which are too much concern'd in this unhappy Affair, which has forc'd and plung'd me into a Necessity of a Vindication.

Tho', as to my self, I cou'd very easily have submitted to what, I think, I may call **HARD USAGE**: Not that I have no Sense of Pain; or that I cannot feel the Wound that I have receiv'd: But, I thank God, *Hic Murus Aeneus est*, 'tis what I have met with for my faithful, sincere Labour, to promote the Glory and Honour of God; for I have had no other Prospect; I have had no **BAGG** in my View, for all that I have been doing; and this is my Comfort and my strong Hold.

Besides, I have been, for many a Year past, accusom'd to such Returns; tho' indeed these Blasts have usually come, ab Aquilone, unde omne malum, from a quite different Point; the Breath of a very malignant Sett of Men, who by infectious Clamours, have attempted the most Glorious Actions of the Best of Men, to raise a Storm to Shipwrack and Confound 'em.

And, therefore, being habituated to such Tryals, I am the more inur'd to bear them on **ALL** Sides.

Yet I hope I shall be justified, and it cannot be taken amiss, if I set the Case before us in a true Light: For, I am positive, 'tis Mistake **SOMEWHERE**, from whence we suffer in the Defacing of our Holy Place; and this I shall undertake with all possible Deference and Submission to his Lordship; tho' I humbly crave Leave to say, He has not seen **OUR GLORY** nor **OUR RUINS** with his own Eyes; and I have no other Way left me to clear this Point, than **THUS** to give a true Account of the whole Matter.



## The PREFACE.

*It will not therefore be look'd upon as impertinent nor foreign to the Affair in Hand, that I acquaint the World, that for many Years pass'd, when the Church was under its greatest Distress, and yet it was almost Treason to say it was in Danger; when every Principle of Latitude was countenanc'd and promoted; and the Sacred Order itself was in all things Brow-beaten, discouraged, and almost struck Dumb; that I could not but look upon my self, as doubly engag'd, in my private Station to be steady, and constant in my Endeavours, to settle a right Judgment in those whom God had committed to my Charge.*

*What great Difficulties, what Hazards and Reproaches I ran thro' at such a Juncture, upon this account, I have no farther Occasion to mention, than as they may be suppos'd to recommend me at least to be treated as a faithful Minister, that have stood the Brunt of late Dangers, with as true a Courage, and as unshaken and LASTING a Resolution, as ANY of my Brethren.*

*And what Success I have had, the happy Disposition of my Parish at present, after all the Discouragements we have met with, is a sufficient Evidence; God has given me a thousand Witnesses to prove it:*

*And especially by their Generous and Liberal Contributions, at my Request, to Beautify and Adorn the House of God, wherein they have been sparing of no Expence to carry on so desirable a Work.*

*The finishing Part of it was a becoming ALTAR-PIECE; in the Midst of which, as the most proper Design for such a Place, was Erected the Representation of our Blessed Saviour, Instituting his last Supper with his Disciples.*

*And this was, indeed, such an Addition, such an Accomplishment to all the rest, that some strict Dissenters, upon the first View of it, did declare, that this very Piece was worth all that had been done before: And upon the Universal Assembly of the (a) whole Parish, I receiv'd their publick Acknowledgments for the Erecting of it.*

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(a) On Easter Monday.



## The PREFACE.

*In a few Days after I was call'd into my Native County, upon some urgent Business; and then it was that the STRATAGEM about Judas was concerted, which occasion'd my Return so soon as it was possible.*

*And when I found what mischievous Practices were on Foot against us; and by what Forgeries and Falshoods, according to the usual Custom of a restless Faction, our ALTAR-PIECE was become the publick Discourse; and that the Bishop of the Diocese had sent his Chancellor to make Inspection into the Matter; I thought it my Duty, and the best Expedient to set things right, to wait upon my Lord; which I did with Two or Three of the Best and Worthiest of my Friends.*

*What pass'd at that Time ought to be no Secret: His Lordship told me, with all the Tenderness in the World, to this Effect, "That he had been importun'd exceedingly about it; and that He had sent his Chancellor to view it, who had not yet given his Report; but withall, He added, that from thence forward, He was resolv'd to make it a Rule that nothing of that Nature shou'd, for the Future, be put up without His Knowledge and Approbation, which I took to be a kind Reproof upon our Case; and was concern'd; for it was just. For, tho' his Lordship was in a foreign Country, upon a happy Affair, when our Designs were laid for Beautifying our Altar: Yet, as his Lordship's Representative, his Chancellor was ready to be apply'd to, the Church Warden ought to have address'd him; which I hope will be imputed to his Incogitancy, and not to any refractory Design of slighting Authority, or neglecting his Lordship's Prerogative; for there can be no Action, however, in itself meritorious that can justifie that.*

*But if it had been otherwise, as in my Conscience it was not, but a mere Mistake; it wou'd be severe for a publick Community of Men, who had, with such Freedom, contributed to so Religious a Work, to suffer for the Mismanagement of one single Person.*

*However, on the Monday following (the Day appointed by the Chancellor for the Church-Warden to attend him at the Commons in order to receive his Determination about the Picture)*

## The PREFACE.

*ture*) I went with the Church-Warden, attended with about a Hundred of the Best and Chief Inhabitants of my Parish, whose Presence might have been necessary, had we been allow'd to plead for our selves: For, indeed, we had retain'd Dr. Hinchman to this Purpose; but all was superceded; and instead of a Tryal, the poor Picture receiv'd Sentence in these Words.

“ The Judge having a View on the 17th Instant of  
 “ the Picture over the Altar in the Chancel of the  
 “ Parish Church of St. Mary Whitechappel, according to  
 “ the Order of the Right Reverend the Bishop of Lon-  
 “ don, and made a Report thereof to his Lordship, does  
 “ find that the said Picture, by SOME of the Figures  
 “ there represented, will give an Occasion of Scandal  
 “ and Offence, if continu'd there, (as has already  
 “ appear'd by several Complaints made on that Oc-  
 “ casion, and SOME IN THE PUBLICK PRINTS)  
 “ does therefore Order and Direct, that the aforesaid  
 “ Picture be forthwith taken down and remov'd, &c.

*This was the Injunction; these the Reasons of the Judge: And for my own Part, I do not Murmur nor Complain against them; but 'tis necessary that all the Earth shou'd see upon what Motives (and that it was not upon any Account of IDOLATRY, as has (a) since been suggested) that a Minister of a Parish, and a well-meaning People, have been thus treated, and our Church has receiv'd so Great a Blemish.*

*Had there been any thing in that valuable Piece, that cou'd justly, and from any other Breath, have been said to the Judge, to be offensive; yet still, methinks, the House of God might have been spared; any Figures that were there, even Judas, the Offence of Trimming and Prevaricating Miscreants, might have been altered: But, alas! that wou'd not have serv'd the Turn of the Party; their Offences drove another Way; and, if the Judge WOU'D OBLIGE, down it must all come, Root and Branch; it will still give an Occasion of Scandal and Offence, if CONTINU'D THERE; and therefore he must needs Order and Direct, that the aforesaid*

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(a) See the Case of Images, &c. on Occasion of the Picture set up in White-Chappel, &c.



## THE PREFACE.

Picture be forthwith taken down and remov'd, &c.

*And especially because it has appear'd by several Complaints, and SOME IN THE PUBLICK PRINTS, &c.*

*All the publick complaining Prints were, as far as I cou'd ever learn, the Flying-Post, and a Libel from one Willoughby Willey; in which Libel there is, throughout, (as has been prov'd) as direct Forgery and Falshood, as ever was express'd (a) by Titus Oates, or any Irish Evidence; and, indeed, were it not upon this Account, I wou'd scorn to rake in such a Kennel, or take such Names within my Lips.*

*But to proceed. The Fate of our Churches Ornament, was no sooner determin'd after this Manner, than my Parishioners, amaz'd and confounded at such an unexpected Blast, resolv'd immediately to address the Bishop, and by that appeal to Beseech his Lordship not to suffer such a Turn upon us, after all our great Charge and Expence, laying before him the great Damage the Picture it self wou'd sustain by being torn down; and that we wou'd readily submit to alter any Thing that his Lordship shou'd think fit to have altered; and therefore Beseech his Lordship to take a personal View. &c.*

*These were the chief Contents of our design'd Appeal to his Lordship, which we resolv'd to present to him the next Morning, subscrib'd by five Hundred of the Chief of my Parish.*

*But before it was ingross'd I carry'd it to Dr. Hinchman, for his Advice, lest there shou'd have been a Word in it misplac'd, or that might give Occasion of Offence: Upon which, the Doctor having read it, and finding our Resolutions fix'd, told us that he wou'd go and Talk privately with the Chancellor; which he did; and, upon his Return, told us, that he had done our Business; and that the Chancellor had consented, that if we wou'd put a Beard upon Judas, and alter his Complexion, and make St. John's an older Face, (which, by the Bye, was as entirely unrepresented the other way) we shou'd not be oblig'd to take the Picture down; and he order'd us accordingly to get a new Sketch of the Picture, with St. John and*

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(a) See the Answer to Willey's Letter, &c. sold by John Morphew.

## The PREFACE.

Judas alter'd, to be ready against the next Court Day, which we gladly did; and oblig'd the Painter to sit up three Nights to finish it: But when the Time came we found to our Cost that all the Design of giving us that last Addition to our Expence and Trouble, appear'd only an Artifice, on the other Hand, to leave us no Time for an Appeal—I mean to his Lordship; for we rather chose the utmost Indignity, than to appeal any other where.

And this is the Whole, and the Truth of the Matter, which has occasion'd so many different Speculations about the Kingdom.

The Consequences of which I dread; to think what a Wound has been given, and a Stifling of that publick Spirit, that has, of late, ran so Gloriously thro' the Nation, of Beautifying and Adorning our English Churches; and upon which Account, my Church, my People, and my self, are become a By-Word, and the Reproach of the very Scum of a Whigg-Faction, whom it wou'd be a Defilement to Name or Answer.

O! How do the Enemies of God Blaspheme and Triumph upon this Occasion! whilst they declare Abroad, that **OUR IDOL** is taken down! This is the Use they make of the Encouragement that has been given to their Noise and Clamour.

I cannot, indeed, sufficiently Lament the Mischief I have sustain'd in my own Parish upon this Account: There is not in the whole Kingdom a Sett of People, more steady in the Principles of Righteousness and Justice, nor more sincerely affected to the Good Old Church of England, than those *Worthy Gentlemen* in my Parish, who have born a Share with me in this Disgrace; and 'tis the greatest Affliction to me, in the World, to see how some of 'em are stagger'd at the Blow that has been given us; as if we had been committing Idolatry, or Setting up Image-Worship, at the same Time that we were Erecting one of the most proper Ornaments in our Church that Religious Devotion cou'd invent.

This is the chief Call I had to the following Discourse; and I doubt not, but, however, I may be Evil-treated by the Partisans of a Factious Judas, upon the Account of it; yet God will bless my Undertaking to undeceive those who have been led into Error by the Craft of designing Men; and, in his own Way, prosper and reward it. **A M E N.**

I KINGS





I KINGS VI. 28th & 29th Verses.

*And he overlaid the Cherubims with Gold.  
And he Carved all the Walls of the House  
round about with Carved Figures of Che-  
rubims, and Palm-Trees, and open Flow-  
ers within and without.*



**T**HIS is Part of a Description of that Temple at Jerusalem, whose Foundation was laid, and whose mighty Structure and Magnificence was design'd, carry'd on and finish'd, by a Religious Prince, with the Approbation and Blessing of God upon it.

A Work indeed it was so stupendiously Great and Glorious, that, as the just (a) Historian of those Times tells us, No Tongue can express the Difficulties of raising it; and a Man would have much ado to believe his own very Eyes that saw it; and that there was nothing wanting, of Industry, Magnificence, or Expence, towards the Advancing of this glorious Work, that might either express the

(a) Josephus.

**ZEAL OF THE FOUNDER HIMSELF FOR  
THE HONOUR OF GOD, or STIR UP THE  
LIKE AFFECTIONS IN OTHERS.**

It is not what I purpose, at this Time, to attempt any farther Description of the Beauty and the Glory of this heavenly Place, than what the Words of my Text direct us to; and that is, that amongst other Ornaments and Decorations of this Temple of God it was set out with the Addition of various and sundry *Figures* and *Representations* of Things in Heaven, and on Earth, with *Cherubims* and *Palm-trees*, and *open Flowers*; which were so far from being an Offence to God, that he *Commanded* them to be done, and approv'd of 'em when they were finished; and, upon the Dedication of the Temple, with all its innumerable Variety of *Carved Ornaments* and *Figures* all around it, God declar'd himself so well pleased with it, that (a) *Concerning this House*, he tells 'em (b) *I have hallowed this House to put my Name there for ever; and mine Eyes and my HEART shall be there perpetually.*

And yet it was about 500 Years before this, that God had most expressly forbidden the *Jews* to make to themselves any graven Image, or so much as the *Likeness* of any thing in Heaven, or on the Earth, or in the Sea; from whence it must be concluded, that these Words are not to be taken in a literal Sense, as I shall demonstrate in the proper

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(a) *Ver. 12.*

(b) *Chap. ix. v. 3.*



Place; for otherwise *Solomon*, who was a *Wise and Prudent* as well as a *Religious* Prince, would never have profan'd the Temple of God with any impious Representations, nor wou'd he have acted against a plain Command: And tho' afterwards, indeed, he fell away and suffer'd himself to be tempted into the Idolatry of the Children of *Canaan*; yet, it must be allow'd, that, at *this time*, he was acting according to the OEconomy of the Mosaick Dispensation, and doing what was ACCEPTABLE in the Sight of God.

I take my Occasion from hence to justify the Zeal and Piety of those, whose religious Disposition for the Honour of God, has led them to joyn with me in Beautifying **THIS HOUSE**; not doubting but, after all the Noise and false Rumour that have been rais'd against it, by those of a *disaffected* and *Calvinistical* Prejudice, I shall be able, by the Grace of God, to vindicate the *Inoffensiveness* and *Innocence*, and even the *Usefulness* of that Representation of our Blessed Saviour with his Disciples Instituting the blessed Sacrament, that did so adorn our Altar, from the malicious Calumny, and artful Contrivances of those double-minded Men, that will *strain at a Gnat but swallow a Camel*; and make it appear that all these pretended Scruples are *vain* and *groundless*; that it is a Straining the Sense of our most *excellent* Homilies and Canons what they urge against us; and that there can be, in Truth, nothing more of *Offence* in Beautifying God's House, after this Manner, than there was even in the Religious and Wise *Solomon* himself,

self, when he *over-laid the Cherubims with Gold,* and *Carved all the Walls of the House, round about, with carved Figures of Cherubims, and Palm-trees, and open Flowers, within and without.*

And to this End, I do assert, *First*, That such Representations as these, in our Consecrated Places, are no just Occasion of *Offence* or *Scandal* to a good Christian. *Secondly*, That it cou'd never be the Intent and Meaning of our Homilies totally to discountenance and prohibit pious Designs of Beautifying God's House by such decent, and becoming Ornaments.

*Thirdly*, That these Representations in our Churches have their peculiar Benefit and Usefulness when they are appropriated to a right Purpose.

First then I assert, that such Representations as these, in our devoted Places, are no just Occasion of *Offence* or *Scandal* to a good Christian.

For *that* cannot be the just Occasion of Offence to a good Man *that is not so to God*: And nothing can be an Offence to God, that is not either a Moral Evil, or a Breach of some positive Command from above.

If it were a Moral Evil to adorn the House of God with the Representation of any Ornamental Figures therein; were this, I say, any *Natural* or *Moral* Evil, God himself cou'd never have dispens'd with such a Practice upon any Occasion whatsoever; for that which is a Moral Evil is immutably so, and can sustain no Alteration for ever: And

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we may as well suppose God, who is the Fountain of all Purity and Truth, capable of Inverting the Course and Nature of *Justice, Equity and Righteousness*, as of dispensing with a Moral Evil, or being reconciled to it.

But we find that God has dispens'd with the Variety of *Figures and Ornaments* in his House: Yea, he has *commanded* 'em to be pourtrayed and erected there, by several, the most (a) *positive Injunctions in the holy Scriptures*: So that our Devotions this way cannot be an Offence to God upon any Moral Account, which sufficiently displays to the World, the Sense as well as the Religion of those Men who, in profound, puritanick Zeal, exclaim against the *Immorality* of Beautifying and Adorning the House of God.

And, in the next Place, that this is no Breach of God's exprefs Command will as easily appear: For how can we suppose it displeasing unto God, or contrary to his Will, that we shou'd give all possible Instances we are able that we *Honour* him! Or that he shou'd *Command* us to retrench in any of our holy Purposes, that may be suppos'd to express our Reverence or Devotion towards him! When we look upon this House to be the *Temple*, to be the *Sanctuary of our God*; and, under a Sense of his *peculiar Habitation there*, strive to deck and adorn this House with the most proper and becoming Ornaments, as the wisest Prince, and a singular Favourite of God, has done before, and set us an

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(a) Vide Exod. 25. Num. 31, &c.

Example, upon which *the Blessing of God is upon Record*; Can this be acting in Defiance of God's Commands? No; His Commands are always just, tho' the Saints of this Generation have refin'd upon them, 'till it is become *a Sin* and an *Offence* to Beautify this Temple!

That there is no exprefs Command from God that forbids such Religious Ornaments in our Churches, is what, I think, no Man can justly deny: As to that Prohibition, so strictly laid upon the *Jews*, in the Second Commandment; this is so far from being an Argument against the Beautifying of our Churches with the comely Ornaments of Religious Representations, that it seems to carry with it an *Implication* and *Encouragement* to do it; at least it infers the *Innocence* and *Lawfulness* thereof.

And that this has been the Universal Opinion of the most Zealous Advocates for the Reformation, is evident from the Testimony of that Learned (a) Prelate, who has indeed wrote very effectually against the *Adoration of Images*, proving that (b) *they were not set up in Churches to the Intent that the People might Worship them*: But that Great Man himself is so far from asserting the *Offensiveness* of these Representations in the Church, that he tells his Adversary, who objected the Command of God to *Moses*, to make the Cherubims and the Brazen Serpent. (c) *These Examples*, says the Bishop,

(a) Bishop Jewel.

(b) Art. 14. against Mr. Harding.

(c) Vide. Bishop Jewel against the *Adoration of Images*. Art. 14. p. 369.



*make little against my Assertion: For, says he, God commanded not, either the Cherubims or the Serpent to be set up to the Intent the People shou'd WORSHIP them, which is the WHOLE and ONLY State of this Question.*

He had nothing farther to object in this Case; nothing against the Decency and Ornament of Beautifying the House of God after this Manner; only let us not commit Idolatry; let us not Bow down to them, nor Worship them; for this, indeed, is an Offence, and most justly will provoke Him who is a jealous God.

And to this Purpose another very Orthodox Bishop, in his Exposition upon the Second Commandment, tells us, (a) that Images, or Pictures, are not absolutely prohibited either HERE, or in any other Place of Scripture. (b) God commanded these, says he, to be made by Moses. And again, (c) As for Pictures, or such Representations by Painting, they, being not so apt to nourish the Opinion of an inherent Deity in them, the Making or USING them WAS NOT PROHIBITED.

And the same Learned Author, in another Place, quotes Tertullian, saying, (d) God saith not (in the Second Commandment) that an Image shou'd NOT BE MADE; But thou shalt not make it TO THY SELF, i. e. to be thy God, to worship it, and to fall down before it.

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(a) Andrews Exposit. on the Ten Commandments; p. 193.

(b) Ib. p. 198.

(c) Ib. p. 194.

(d) Lib. de Idol. Tom. 2. p. 447.

This was the Opinion of the greatest Men that ever the Reformation produced; add to these the Learned *Grotius*, introducing his Authority, that *(e)* *there is no Prohibition from God to forbid the Use of such Things, provided they were not abused and perverted to a superstitious Purpose.*

Thus far then, I presume, we may be clear, that the decent Ornaments of our Church, whether in Paintings, or otherwise, are not an Offence, nor against the Command of God; and consequently they cannot, in Justice, become a Scandal and a Stumbling to a good Christian.

2. I proceed therefore, in the next Place, to shew, that it cou'd never be the Intent and Meaning of the Homilies of the Church of *England* totally to discountenance and prohibit pious Designs of Beautifying our Churches by such decent and becoming Ornaments.

And indeed this Truth comes under the Shelter of the former Argument, and is a necessary Consequence of what is said before; for it cannot be that those inspir'd Pen-men, who have wrote so excellent a System of all practical Religion, shou'd, whilst they were representing the Peril of Idolatry, be *Condemning the devout Work* of Adorning the House of God, even with the brightest and most solemn Instances of Glory, and the utmost Variety of Representation, that were neither against the Word of God, nor an Offence or Grievance to his holy Spirit.

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*(e)* Itaq; non prohibentum, si quis Imagines facere voluerit, adorare vero Imagines omnibus modis devitandum. *Grot. Tom. 3. p. 592.*



The very Scriptures themselves must be always understood after this Manner, and with a Rational and Religious Reserve; Else they wou'd appear rather the Word of *Confusion* than the Word of *God*.

And we must read and understand our Homilies as we do our Bible; that is, so as not to make them clash and interfere with, and to contradict themselves; Otherwise we shall transform our Zeal into Profaneness; and instead of a pure Worship, we shall act a *Sacrilege*.

What can there be more positive, and seemingly exprefs, than that Command of God upon the Sabbath Day? *In it*, says he, *thou shalt do NO MANNER OF WORK*; *thou, nor thy Son, nor thy Daughter*, and so on. They were forbid the Unhallow'd Work, even to the Beasts that perish; And yet we find our Blessed Saviour, upbraiding those puritanick *Jews* in the Gospel, with a *conscious Hypocrisy* and *Sham-Zeal*, because they were so squeamish upon the Literal, and so loose and MODERATE in the Moral Sense of it: (a) *Which of you*, says he, *shall have an Ass, or an Ox fallen into a Pit, and will not straitway pull him out on the Sabbath Day?* They could not bear that a Work of the greatest Charity and Mercy shou'd be done upon that Day; But, for *filthy Lucre's sake*, tho' they cou'd give up the Man, their Fellow-Creature, they cou'd also profane that very Sabbath for the Value of an Ass!

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(a) *St. Luke xiv. 5.*

The Application is just in our present Case ; we are so afraid of Idolatry, that we commit Sacrilege for fear of it ; and never cease our Cries against it, 'till the Holy Place is violated, and pillag'd of its most decent Ornaments : But we can set up the Idol *Mammon* and Worship it ; and Sacrifice our God, and our Country, and our Salvation to it, without Scruple ; This is our *Diana* ; and for This we can take a Thousand different Shapes upon us, contradict the very Light of Nature, and transform our Judgment and our Consciences into as many different Idea's as we have Occasion for ; and set the very Scriptures, and the Homilies, and even the Reformed at Variance with and against themselves, to serve a Turn : But tho' in those Sermons against Idolatry, there may be some Expressions that seem positive in Relation to Figures of the Saints and our Blessed Saviour ; yet we are to understand those Passages as we do those of the Second and Fourth Commandment ; and not to pervert the Sense of our Fore-Fathers against Idolatry, and change it into an Unsanctified Zeal against the pious Ornaments of the Church.

When the Homilies of our Church were first composed, Religion was almost overshadow'd with Ignorance and Idolatry, and the Reformation was but in its Infancy, and Dawning : Images had been long erected and set up under the Solemn Purposes of an *Execrable Adoration* ; and therefore it well became those holy Men of old, to take away and remove all those



those Means, and every thing that might give Occasion for so irreligious a Practice : It well became them then to be express, as they were, against *Every Appearance*, by which an ignorant People, and a Nation bigotted to Idol-worship, might have Opportunity to relaps into that *abominable Sin*.

But what then ? Shall we from thence infer, that the Pious Managers of the Reformation have absolutely forbid the most proper, the most decent, and most becoming, I say, the most useful Ornaments of the House of God ? Because Ignorance and Idolatry, about two hundred Years ago, made it necessary for the Governors of the Church, in those Days, to be industrious and exact in the Prevention of *Image-worship* ; shall we therefore be apprehensive of a Breach of our Obedience against the Church, for Adorning the Place of our Worship with a becoming Glory ? How unjust is it to expound those religious, those pious Votaries to God, and all the Decencies of Religion, after this Manner ! What a Profanation is it to the Memory of those good Men ! What a Stain and a Crimfon wou'd these designing Hypocrites fix upon their sacred Characters ! Enough, one wou'd think, by mere Reflexion, to throw Shame and Confusion, and a Blush upon themselves.

Especially when they consider what a Scandal and Reproach ; what a Charge of *Idolatry*, and a *Breach of the Homilies*, they are fixing upon our *present Governors*, both *Spiritual and Temporal* ; who, (if the Assertions of these our Enemies

be true) are all *expounded* into *Idolatry*, and the *Guilt* of Erecting, or at least *continuing erected Idols* in the Church: For certainly, if the Homilies condemn these Ornaments, 'tis as much a Breach of them to *permit their Continuance* in our Churches as to erect them:

Now that these Representations shine in most of our (a) *Cathedral and Royal Temples*, as well as in our common Places of Devotion, is beyond Dispute: It wou'd be endless to enumerate the hundredth Part of 'em; how, and after what Manner *Both our Universities*, Those Pillars of the Reformation, and Supporters of all decent OEconomy and Order of the Church, how *They* understand the Homilies, whilst They are still daily adding to the Beauty of their Sacred Places, and Replenishing the House of God with such a Variety of Religious-Idea's.

In one of our (b) Churches we find the Representation even of *St. Peter*, under the Inspection of a *Modern Prelate*; who, tho' his Nicety wou'd not give him to *allow the Blessed Sacrament to be a Christian Sacrifice*; yet even He has found no Fault, no Breach of Homilies, nor nothing impious in these Religious Adornments: And I doubt not but there may be a President of this Nature; (c) *Secundum Usum Insignis Ecclesiae Sarum.*

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(a) See the Abby at Westm. &c.

(b) St. Peters at Norwich.

(c) See the Chapter-House at Salisbury.



How remarkable is that Sacred and Royal (a) Temple enrich'd so often with the Presence of Her that sits there, the *Vicegerent of God*; giving up her Accounts to that *Greater Majesty of Heaven and Earth*! How remarkable, I say, is that Place, for the glorious Resemblance that is pourtray'd there of our *Blessed Saviour with his Disciples, Instituting the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*! How does that Glory shine of which *we are bereav'd, and left naked*! And yet behold Her that is said to be the *Supreme Moderator and Governor of all these Causes*; how she sits there, as an Angel of God, delighted with the Graceful and Becoming Ornament! Were these things an Offence to God or Man; were they, in the least, destructive of the true Meaning of the Homilies of our Church, it were impious to suppose that *so much Goodness, and so nice a Taste* of the most pure Religion wou'd not be offended!

It were impossible to advance this Argument after the last Instance that has been urg'd; the *very Fountain from whence all secular Authority is deriv'd*: But, *for a certain Reason*, it may not be improper to add this one Notice more, *viz.* that we have the same Representation of our Blessed Saviour at the Sacrament with his Disciples, at the Becoming Altar of our (b) Neighbour Church, where that Religion is profess'd, which is The Religion of that Person who, by the Act of Succession, is to be *the Defender of our Faith*, upon Her

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(a) Her Majesty's Chappel-Royal at Windsor.

(b) At the Lutheran Church in Well-Close Square.

present Majesty's Demise—which God Avert ! And continue her long a Blessing to us.

I hold it always the most just and safest Way to take the Intention of the Homilies, as indeed of all our Laws, from the Practice of that Sovereign Authority, from whose Sanction they derive Strength, and from whose Hand they issue: And what has been the Practice of ALL our Sovereign Princes, *our Supreme Moderators*, ever since the Reformation, in Relation to our present Subject; and how far they have *allow'd*, and *countenanc'd*, and *acted in it*, is too conspicuous to be conceal'd.

The very Compilers of the Homilies themselves, have left us such Apparent Testimonies of their Meaning in this Case, in most of our Churches thro' the Kingdom; that, tho' they were so sacrilegiously defac'd by that Brood of Rebels in Forty-One; yet there are left still, from the Pillage and Destruction of that devouring Usurpation, enough of 'em to convince an honest Man, that those Orthodox and Reverend Divines, (as well as the Royal Predecessors of Her present Majesty, from whose Authority their Works receiv'd their Strength) could not so contradict and act against themselves, as to have suffer'd and left behind them such a Variety of carved Works and Painting, (a) *even of the whole History of the New Testament*, had they not been of the same Opinion with that excellent Comen-

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(a) See the Royal Chappel at Kings-Coll. Camb. &c.



tator, who, in his Exposition upon the Second Commandment, tells us, if I understand him right, that under this Precept *they are only (a) Idols*, or Images to be worship'd, as if they invested some inherent Deity; *and not mere Images themselves, that are forbidden.*

But the Off-spring of that profane and impious Generation, with the perverse and mercenary Profelites and Adherents to them, are resolv'd to take no President but from *Holland and Geneva.*

I had almost said, but I'm afraid I shou'd have been mistaken, that they don't consider, that all these Scruples, and Sham-pretences of Idolatry and Homilies, &c. are not only levell'd against the *Honour due to God*; but, in Fact, they are an *Arraignment of Her present Majesty, the Bishops, the Clergy, and all their pious Predecessors*; Yea, I hope, by God's Providence, I may say, of their religious Posterity 'till the Day of Judgment. Thus they affront Majesty; are mangling the Church, and wounding the Sacred Order of it, and wipe their Mouths, and cry out Idolatry!

It were well if they wou'd be so observant of the Homilies in other Cases, especially those Apostolick Sermons against Rebellion, upon which their Salvation depends; but there they have no Scruples, they have Latitude indeed! Here they have forgot how "*solemnly, (b) before the Exercise of any Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, they have*

(a) Corn a Lap. in Deut. Cap. 5.

(b) Vide The Case concerning the Setting up Images, &c. p. 12.

"willingly,

“willingly, and *ex Animo*, (unless they prevaricated  
 “with God and the Bible,) *assented, consented, ap-  
 “proved, and subscribed these Articles; and this  
 “Doctrine; and that absolutely without any Glosses  
 “or Senses of their own.*

'Tis amazing to see how these Dissemblers with God and Man can have the Assurance to invoke the Homilies and Canons, &c. (to serve their Schismatical Purposes) upon such a strain'd and indifferent Occasion; and at the same time so consciously *impugn, confound, and break 'em where the very Salvation of their Souls lies at Stake!* Inean, those most excellent Homilies against Rebellion, which are the most plain, natural, and obvious; in the Sense of 'em, in Defiance to all Canons and Statutes and DAMNATION whatsoever.

'Tis a plain Case, that in Opposition to all Right and Justice, and the most Fundamental Laws, they will still vindicate their Rebellions, and the CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE; But in Point of Decency and good Order, their Fears and Jealousies are still upon them, to prevent the good Effects of a regular and just Symmetry even in the House of God:

3. And this brings me, in the last Place, to make it appear; that these decent Representations in our Churches have their peculiar Usefulness, when they are appropriated to a right Purpose.

And here, far be it from us to make use of any Argument that may favour of a *Romish* Principle, so as to give the least Encouragement to Idolatry or Superstition; which we *detest and abhor*, as truly



truly impious and abominable to God, and every good Christian: But so far as these things are Ornamental and Becoming the House of God, so far as they may be supposed to take the Mind off from inferior Objects, so long as we carry Flesh and Blood about us, and the Soul may be supposed to receive Impression thro' the Senses; it cannot be irrational, but far from impious, to deck and adorn our Churches with such innocent Resemblances as these are.

If the Church Militant here, as a Great Man tells us, be (a) a Place of Angels and Arch-Angels, and a Resemblance of Heaven; certainly nothing can be more proper than to shadow out these Receptacles of its Members, with some Shew and Representation of what is above.

And tho', indeed, I cannot go so far in my Opinion of the Usefulness of these Religious Objects in our Places of Devotion, as that (b) Great Advocate for the Reformation seems to do; whilst, under the Authority of St. Gregory, he calls 'em the (c) *Laymens Books*; and of St. Basil, to the same Purpose; (d) acknowledging, to use his own Words, *that the People may LEARN somewhat by these Means*; yet I must agree with him, where he tells us, in (e) another Place, that *these Things vehemently move the Mind to sundry Af-*

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(a) *Ecclesia locus Angelorum, locus Arch-angelorum, &c.*  
Chrys.

(b) *Bishop Jewel.*

(c) *Lib. 9.*

(d) *Vide Jewel, p. 178.*

(e) *Ib. p. 379.*

*fections ; and I reckon him, says that Bishop, A blind Man that will hold the contrary.*

And to this purpose we are told by a veracious Historian, that (a) *it was an ancient Custom in the World to perpetuate the Memory of those they thought worthy, by representing them in Effigie after they were dead.*

And St. Cyprian himself, in his Just and Authentic Invective against the Vanity of Idols, shews us this Advantage of innocent Representations, viz. that (b) *they are design'd a Refreshment to the Mind, to keep the Idea of our dead Friends in Remembrance.*

And what if a People, corrupt in their Ways, use these (otherwise useful) Ornaments to a Purpose not allowable, shall we therefore deprive our selves of their proper Service? Let us then, by the same Reason, cast away our Churches themselves, and our Liturgy together, because the same People have corrupted both of 'em!

Or shall we Rifle the House of God of its most becoming Ornaments, because others abuse them by a superstitious Devotion to 'em? By the same Reason we must abjure *the Blessed Sacrament itself*, because they worship the *Host*, the *Consecrated Bread*.

But rather let us maintain them all in their proper Efficacy and Operation: And tho', indeed,

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(a) Ita illi soleant Honorare quos Honore dignos duxerint. Euseb. Lib. 7. Cap. 17. Quoted by Jewel.

(b) Ad defunctorum Vultus per Imaginem detinendos expressa sunt Simulachra. Cyp. de Idolorum Vanitate.



in the Case before us, there is, as one calls it, (a) a most artificial Influence upon the Mind, yet they are εἰς λόγον βεβιωκότας their Pretences are contradictory to common Sense, that will needs have it, that we must be deceiv'd into any thing unlawful by these Means.

And to this we have the Testimony of that incomparable Assertor and Expositor of our Creed, who tells us that the Faithful do not in the least worship the Images we put up, as if there were any thing of Divinity inherent in them: Far be it from us! But we have 'em before us upon no other Account, than to make Impression upon our Senses; and by that Means to kindle in our Minds, and warm them into, an Affectionate Memory of our deceased Friends, that is, the Confessors and Martyrs, and the Saints of God.

This is very far from the Purpose of Idolatry, or the Danger of such unaccountable Superstition; but design'd to a more useful and warrantable Intention; to raise an Emulation and holy Zeal; to imitate the Example of those Worthies and that noble Army of Martyrs, that were gone before them to see God!

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(a) Δεσφείθ' ἢ ἡ δημοσυγκλή, ἀλλ' ἔχ' διὰ τὴν ἀπατῆσαι λογικόν, ἢ δὲ μὴν καὶ λόγον βεβιωκότας. Clem. Alex. Admon. ad Gent. p. 38. Edit. Lut.

Οὐχ ὡς θεὸς προσκυνῶμεν τὰς εἰκόνας οἱ πρεσβύτεροι, μὴ γένοιτο—ἕως καὶ αἱ πρεσβυτέραι εἰς ἑτέρον τινα τρόπον τὰς εἰκόνας ἀσπαζόμεθα, εἰ μὴ διὰ πᾶν ὃν ἐμφανίζομεν, ἀλλὰ μόνον τὸ χάριν, καὶ τὸ ἀγάπην τῆς Ψυχῆς ἡμῶν πρὸς τὸν ἁγιοκτίστην τὴν εἰκόνα ἐμφανίζομεν. Ath. per Bened. Tom. 2. p. 277.

And I take it to be the Design of that Prelate that I mention'd before, to corroborate his Sense of this Matter, that he brings in *Salust*, giving an Account that (a) *Quintus Maximus, & Publius Scipio*; whenever they beheld their Ancestors in Effigie, they were, as he says, by and by inflamed with Nobility of Courage to advance themselves to the like Adventures.

What can be said more in Vindication of these our Religious Purposes, in Representing the Solemn Appearance of holy Things in the Church, than we find in the Works of (b) that most Learned Rabbi in our Christian Theology! Speaking of the Art itself; "Painting, says he, "and Graving, are warrantable and PROFITABLE Arts, and the GIFTS OF GOD; and "commended by God himself, in Bezaleel, for his "Wisdom and Understanding in them: The Reason that he gives for it is, *Because these Arts conduce to the Preservation of the Memory of Things past; as also for the Delight (or Refreshment) of the Mind*: And in his Arguments for the Inoffensiveness and Innocency of them in themselves, he brings in *St. Jerom*, making this Distinction; (c) *That God has no where forbid the making such Representations, but that we shou'd not make them our Idols*. Here, as that Casuist observes, lies the Emphasis or Energy

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(a) *Bishop Jewel*; p. 379.

(b) *Bishop Andrews*.

(c) *Non Simulachrum, non Imago damnatur, sed non facies tibi*. *Jer. In Amos* 5. 13.



of the Command; (a) *Not, that thou shalt not make them; but thou shalt not make them to thy self.*

I have dwelt the longer upon these Authorities, that you may be satisfied how the most holy Purposes of the Best of Men may be perverted, by the Cunning of a Malicious and Time-serving Generation, to carry on their Schismatical Projections: And to let you see, that tho' it has pleas'd God to suffer those that have evil Will against us, by their Noise and Clamour, to rattle our holy Places, and to rob God of what has been devoted to him in his Sanctuary; yet that *our Consciences are still clear*, and we have done *nothing but what was our Duty*; and for which, notwithstanding all the *Discouragements* and *Injuries* we meet with here, we shall one Day receive Eulogy and Applause from Jesus Christ, whose *REPRESENTATION* has been *taken from our Eyes*!

I doubt not, My Dear Brethren, but the same Spirit is in you, which was then, when you so cheerfully, and so universally, joyn'd with me to Beautify and Adorn these Sacred Walls; and that you do as *Universally* Lament with me, that All the Glory, All the Symmetry and Beauty of our whole Work is brought to nothing!

But, let our deep Concern be plac'd right: Let us not distrust our God: Let us remem-

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(a) Vide Bp. Andrews; p. 193.

ber that He can remove all our Enemies: 'Tis our Business therefore to resign our selves to his Will; to submit our selves to his Providence, and not to Murmur at any cross Dispensation; and then we shall be safe.

Let us also shew our Submission to God by our Obedience to Those whom he has set over us: Let no vexatious Tryal rob us of our Integrity and Uprightness, *from whatever Hand our Affliction comes*: Our Governors are not to give Account to Us, upon what secret Springs *their Wisdom* moves; nor why the best of Causes, I mean our innocent and honest Zeal and Regard for this Holy Place, shou'd be expos'd to all this Havock, only to quell the Clamours of a sacrilegious Rabble, set on *by those who have been offended from a Sense of their own Guilt*.

To answer these in their Wickedness and Folly, wou'd be to argue even with Hell itself: Let Judas be still a Traytor; *He that is Unjust, let him be Unjust still*; and he that is Filthy, let him be Filthy still.

Let us only then betake our selves to God, and lay open all our Grievances there: Let us only before him complain, how sad our Condition is, when we must be forc'd *to argue* for Beautifying God's House, as if it were *become a Sin*; and to *plead for Leave* to do to God this Honour, as if it were a Crime; when, to silence the designing Clamours of a heedless Throng, we must be forc'd, by the Artifices of Evil Men, to prophane what has been appropriated to holy Use



Use ; When our religious and devout Purposes must be stifled to gratifie a Mob, and one of the best of Causes must give way to the more powerful Argument of Noise and Mutiny.

This indeed is a Circumstance very deplorable ! I think the Rebellion began with the sacrilegious Cry of *no Bishops, no Popish Bishops* ; which they never ceased, after they once found Countenance, 'till Episcopacy was abolish'd, and the Church **TOTALLY CONFOUNDED**.

When the Clamours of a Faction grow stronger than the Cause of God, 'tis the discovering Strength to a wild Beast ; and there is but the same Expectation from this, the more unthinking Monster, when once the Reins are let loose, and a Faction finds its Outrage prevalent and successful.

Such Truths as these, when they become ripe for Action, wou'd make a Man that is in earnest with his Religion to tremble ; but God is still our Refuge under all these Troubles : *Let us then commit our Works to him, and he shall bring it to pass, and satisfie the Request of our Lips :* Let us never cease to beseech him ; to importune him : Let us *give him no Rest* 'till he has re-establish'd our Sion, and made it become, once more, *a Praise*, as it has been, *in the Earth* : Then God will look with Compassion upon our Ruins ! And it will pity him to behold how the Glory of our Temple is levell'd with the Dust ! Then he will give his Angels charge over us ; and no longer Commission to the *destroying Angel,*

get, but a *Ministring Spirit*, to administer the *Blessings of Restoration and Joy to us*; and to restore our Shine *that is become dim!*

Which God Almighty grant, for the Sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, be for ever ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Praise and Glory, Might, Majesty and Dominion, henceforth and for ever more. *Amen.*





